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# **Voice Economy.**



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Oxford University Extension Lectures,

1901.

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# Voice Economy :

A LECTURE

DELIVERED AT OXFORD, AUGUST, 1901,

BY

MISS D'ORSEY,

*Hon. Secretary of the Church Society for Training the  
Speaking Voice.*

**Oxford :**

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“Art has for its business to praise GOD.”—*Ruskin*.

It has been remarked with some truth that the subject of Voice Production crops up perennially in the columns of the newspapers side by side with such subjects of general interest as the "Strand Improvement Scheme," "Organ-grinding and other Street Noises." Although little seems to have resulted from all this, it may perhaps have helped to prepare the public mind for the more dignified treatment this important question has of recent years received at the hands of the British Medical Association and the Educational authorities. Be that as it may, however, it can hardly be disputed that the subject is coming more and more to the front, that it has already passed beyond the limits of mere discussion and criticism, and may fairly be said to have attained to the dignity of a distinct movement in the direction of practical reform.

It will be my endeavour in the short time at my disposal to show (1) that a reform is desirable, I might almost say necessary, and (2) to put before you as briefly as possible the fundamental principles of the reform proposed, more especially with reference to the Training of the Speaking Voice.

It has been well said by a recent medical writer, "It is the part of those who would most directly benefit by such reform—*viz.* : that section of the

public who 'do' the public speaking, as well as the public themselves, to take the matter up, and not rest until this subject receives the attention it deserves, and scientific Physical Voice-Training be established on a proper basis."

One of the standard writers on the subject of Voice-Training, the late Sir Morell Mackenzie, says in his book on *The Hygiene of the Vocal Organs*, "Training of the Speaking Voice may almost be called one of the lost arts"; and he goes on to emphasize, in a most interesting chapter, the whole of which I should like to quote, his strong conviction, that the want of proper training of the Speaking Voice apart from Singing, is almost entirely responsible for most of the Throat troubles which beset public speakers. Since the date at which these words were penned (1886) increased attention has no doubt been given to this "almost" lost art; and Sir Morell Mackenzie may, I think, justly be called the pioneer of modern times, at any rate on the medical side, of this important movement, just as Canon Fleming and the late Rev. Professor D'Orsey were on the educational side. And when a few years later (in 1892) the members of the Laryngological Section of the British Medical Association discussed the subject they



pronounced their unanimous opinion that "Voice-training was not a mere medical question, but a social, a political and even a religious question"; and the Memorial on Voice-training was as a result of this meeting sent out the following year to our Universities and Public Schools.\* I will not occupy your time by quoting this weighty document addressed to the Educational bodies of the country, but will say briefly that it follows the same general lines laid down by Sir Morell Mackenzie, in the quotation given at the commencement of my lecture; and I may mention perhaps in passing that Canon Fleming thought the scheme put forth by the medical authorities worthy of public attention, and remarks in his book on *The Art of Reading and Speaking*, that "the voice of Science having been lifted up, it behoves us, for whose benefit Science has spoken, to give heed to the warning." Before, however, proceeding to consider the various aspects of the question in our own day, it may not perhaps be without interest to you if I attempt a brief, and I fear a very incomplete, sketch of the matter from the historical standpoint; for this subject has a history—a many-sided and most deeply interesting one, which, however, has not yet been fully chronicled.

Let us, then, for a moment glance back first

\* See page 28.

to a period thousands of years before the Christian Era. Does not Holy Scripture tell us that Aaron was appointed to high office because he could "speak well"? and in the Prophet Ezekiel there occurs that beautiful verse—"Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument"; while we read in the Gospels that the sufferings of the dumb and of the stammerer called forth the compassion and the power of the Divine Healer. Indeed it would not be difficult to quote innumerable texts from both the Old and New Testaments in which voice and speech are specially mentioned as though matters of sufficient import not to be left wholly to take care of themselves. May I also quote the fact that hundreds of years before Christ the Chinese taught breathing exercises, not perhaps so much as a means of developing their voices (which in modern times, at any rate, are not remarkable for their beauty) but as health-giving and invigorating gymnastics.

Then, again, when one comes to consider the amount of attention given to this subject by the Greeks and Romans, "one is filled with amazement," to quote once more the late Sir M. Mackenzie, "on reading the elaborate and protracted

culture which was thought necessary in ancient times for any one who wished to succeed as an orator. Setting aside the purely intellectual discipline, the *physical* education was of so minutely careful a nature that one might suppose at first sight that the pupil was being prepared for the *palæstra* rather than the *rostrum*; indeed, no prize-fighter in the good old days of the 'ring' could have been more conscientiously trained. Demosthenes improved his wind by reciting verses whilst running up hill. . . . Cicero underwent great labour in preparing himself for public life. . . . And we can partly see the result of all this in reading his orations, when we reflect that the man who spoke these long harangues, with an emphasis and action of which we have but little notion nowadays, was of slight physique and delicate constitution."

The very frequent mention of voice and speech in Shakespeare's Plays would, I think, lead us to suppose that the art of Elocution was not altogether neglected in his days; and it was during his lifetime, or rather later, that it occurred to the minds of one or two English Bishops to set before the Clergy of their respective Dioceses the benefits to be derived from due attention to the cultivation of the Speaking Voice; but from the manner in

which their lordships expressed their ideas on voice-training, it would appear that the Episcopal mind viewed the subject rather as affecting the congregation than the clerical throat, while the reformers of our own day may be said to have an equal care at least for both. Another English Bishop, writing in the eighteenth century, propounded the question "whether half the learning in England was not lost because Elocution was not taught in our Schools and Colleges."

When we enter upon the great Victorian Era we rejoice to find an improved state of things, which may without doubt be attributed in a great measure to the influence of the now veteran Garcia, who having lost his voice when quite a young man, took up his residence in Paris in order to try and find it again by the study of medical science in relation to the human voice. He was not only entirely successful in his efforts to regain his voice, but during his studies he so improved and elaborated the laryngoscope that he won the admiration and gratitude of the whole medical world, which our own medical men a few years ago expressed in the usual English fashion by giving a public dinner on his ninetieth birthday, at which Garcia was the honoured guest of the

evening. I feel I cannot pass away from this interesting personality, who is now in his ninety-seventh year, and who did so much to promote in England the true Italian method (which he himself says is Nature's method) without mentioning a most interesting interview I had with this venerable Prophet of Song in the early days of the movement at his pretty little house "Mon Abri." He received me most kindly, and when I told him of the new scheme some of his medical friends the "Throat Specialists" were promoting, he seemed greatly interested, and replied in low "chest notes" which many a man of forty might be thankful to possess, "This is a most serious matter, and I shall be very glad to do what I can, and will give my name to the list of supporters." He afterwards wrote to express his approval of the scheme we had drawn up, and said he would like to be present at the examinations for teachers' certificates.

In speaking of the condition of Voice-Training during the century which has just closed, we must mention the illustrious example of our late Queen, who excelled both as a singer and as a speaker, these accomplishments being due to the most careful training. Fanny Kemble, who was present when the young Queen made her first speech from the Throne,

wrote in rapturous terms of her clear far-reaching voice and exquisite enunciation; and a few years since, when Her Majesty opened the Imperial Institute, it was said that her "silvery tones" were distinctly heard by all present. It will be fresh in the recollection of my audience that when the King ascended the Throne, his clear speaking and excellent voice were universally remarked upon, and *Punch* went even so far as to admonish some of the Peers to follow His Majesty's example.

I am afraid that the opinion entertained by the late Professor Hullah of the English voice may, after all, not be far wrong. He says, in his admirable little book, *The Cultivation of the Speaking Voice*, "The English voice, if not always of inferior quality, is almost always, in intensity or capacity, inferior to the Italian, the German, or the Welsh. . . . . As a rule our speech is wanting both in resonance and distinctness. We reduce to a minimum the sonority of our vowels, and omit or amalgamate with one another half of our consonants. Incompetent readers, slovenly speakers blame the language . . . . . but a careful and impartial comparison of modern European languages would convince us that, in sonority, only one surpasses, and only two or three equal, our own. . . . . English passages without

number might be collected, especially from our poets, which for euphony it would be hard to equal, and impossible to surpass in any other living tongue." Indeed, as some one has said, "we might be a nation of orators," and I would endorse the eloquent appeal made to us in the Inaugural Lecture by Mr. Asquith, M.P., "to preserve from the slipshod, slap-dash, up-to-date modern English—our beautiful mother-tongue."

And now, I think, the time has come when, with your permission, I must pass on to the consideration of the *Speaking* Voice as distinguished from the *Singing* Voice; and as some of you may be singers as well as speakers, and perhaps do both equally well, I feel that I am throwing down the gauntlet; and, as discretion is the better part of valour, will shelter myself to begin with behind two acknowledged "high authorities"—one on the medical, the other on the musical side.

Hullah says that "in speech the voice glides up and down what, by an allowable figure, may be called an inclined plane: in song it makes steps. Speech is for the most part heard only during the passage of the voice from one sound to another: it is the result of intervals; in song intervals are traversed silently, and the voice is heard only on

sounds—the terms or boundaries of intervals. The variations of pitch in speech may be compared to the effect produced by sliding the finger up and down a vibrating string; those in song to that produced by ‘stopping’ such a string at certain points, and at no others. In brief: speech consists almost exclusively of concrete sounds; song almost exclusively of discrete sounds.”

The late Sir Morell Mackenzie begins his chapter on the relation of the Singing to the Speaking Voice by stating that he thinks “there is a smack of metaphysical subtlety about Hullah’s definition,” but although professedly not entirely agreeing with Hullah, he seems to accept his views as in the main correct, and does not commit himself to a scientific definition of his own, merely going on to say, “I am almost disposed to doubt whether the difference between Speech and Song is anything more than that in the former the range is limited to a very few notes delivered without regard to musical time”—and he proceeds to remark that “song bears the same relation to speech that dancing does to walking; it is the poetry of vocal sound. Many speakers utter their sentences with a rhythmical cadence, and even with a variety of modulation, approximating to the recitative of the operatic stage.



Speech and song, therefore, are as the opposite poles of vocal utterance, the interval between them being filled up by declamation and recitative. . . . . One striking circumstance is that not only are the pitch and intensity different, but the *timbre* is often not quite similar in the same voice when used in speech and song respectively ; in some cases, indeed, the difference is so great as to be startling, when, for instance, a voice we are accustomed to hear in ordinary conversation as an unmusical and disagreeable series of noises, becomes transfigured in singing into a stream of liquid melody." There is much more I should like to quote from this delightful author, but in concluding this portion of my subject, I will only say that Sir Morell Mackenzie thinks Quintilian's classification of the varieties of the Speaking Voice can scarcely be improved upon. According to him it may be clear (*candida*) or husky (*fusca*), smooth (*levis*) or harsh (*aspera*), thin (*contracta*) or full (*plena*), stiff (*dura*) or supple (*flexilis*), ringing (*clara*) or muffled (*obtusa*). To these might be added the hollow, nasal, shrill and "*throaty* varieties." If anyone wishes to put any questions on these "varieties," I trust none will be so difficult to answer as that asked me by an elderly gentleman sitting in the front row of seats after one of my

lectures in London. "And what, may I ask, is a 'throaty' voice?" his own vocal "production" being a sufficient reply to his question!

The points I wish to emphasize by the above quotations from Sir Morell Mackenzie and Professor Hullah are: (1) that the Speaking Voice and the Singing Voice are practically different; (2) that being different they require different training after a certain point; and (3) that just as anyone who wishes to be a good singer must have the voice trained to sing, so anyone who wishes to be a good speaker must have the voice trained to speak. It does not at all follow that a good singer will also be a good speaker, although training the Singing Voice is a valuable means of developing the Speaking Voice.

And now I must ask you to accompany me for a few moments into a region of chaos—"the Vocal Chaos," as it has been well called. Under my guidance, I trust you will emerge from it unscathed. I plunged into it as an enthusiast in the "cause"—alone, and totally ignorant of the terrible embroglio in which I was soon to find myself.

If some of my audience should feel inclined to test the strength of their brain-power (after recovering from Extension Lectures) I should advise them to purchase a little book entitled "The Voice, or

the Physiologist *versus* the Singing Master," containing a brief review of the various "Vocal Schools of Thought," if I may coin such an expression, the only one not represented being that of Ruskin, who, with the simplicity of true genius, says, "Breathe correctly and you will sing beautifully."

To enumerate, in the first place, a few of the various "Schools" of Voice Production. I found there was "The Larynx School"—there was "The Pharynx School," "The Three Register School," "The Resonance School." A professional lady, who tried these and other Schools at home and abroad, said they were all more or less wrong, and she had had her own voice nearly ruined by different "systems," and therefore she has founded another "School" of her own. There were also "The Auto-Voce School," "The Mental and Vocal Therapeutic Academy," Professors of "The Higher Development of the Voice," Professors of "The Old Italian Method," Professors from Germany and Norway, from America and New Zealand, all flocking to our shores to help us out of our state of benighted ignorance, for, as an interested outsider expressed it, "the whole subject of Voice-Training seemed to be veiled in impenetrable mystery."

Then as to literature—not to mention pamphlets

and booklets innumerable on "The Art of Breathing," "The Art of Singing," "Mind and Voice," "Mind the Voice," "Charts of the Voice," "Photographs of the Voice," there at last appeared a book purporting to have solved the hitherto insoluble mystery, and entitled "Voxometric Revelation." This book informed us that "*all* previous theories were fundamentally wrong." It is, of course, not for me to express an opinion on this or any other theory put forth by their respective advocates; but perhaps it may be somewhat to the point to mention that a young lady wrote to the newspapers saying she had undergone fifteen different "systems." I am sorry, in the interests of historical accuracy, that she did not describe the condition of her voice after the application of the fifteenth! But perhaps it will be well to bid adieu to all this "pseudo-scientific jargon," as it has been called, and refresh our minds by once more listening to the calm voice of Science. On the question of a *remedy* the Council of the British Medical Association spoke again, and in its second Circular (1894) to Colleges and Schools says:—

"DEAR SIR,

"Referring to my circular letter of November 18th last, and in reply to your enquiry respecting

it, I am directed to inform those Colleges and Schools which have replied to the circular that the Council suggest that one or more of the Resident Teachers of the several Colleges and Schools should receive Instruction on the subject of Voice Training from a properly qualified person.

"I am, Yours obediently,

"FRANCIS FOWKE,

"General Secretary."

Now this is the mere bald outline of a scheme which is in itself perfectly simple and workable, and which, if carried out in our Colleges and Schools, would very soon bring about a different state of things. The second Circular was shortly afterwards followed by the Circular of the Education Department dealing with the subject of reading and speaking in Training Colleges and Schools, partly from the point of view of the *Teacher's Throat*; but as I shall have occasion to mention this Circular when speaking on the subject of Voice Economy, I will only just allude to it here. The immediate outcome of the Circulars issued by the British Medical Association was the foundation of the Society for Physical Voice Training at a meeting held at the Medical Society's Rooms, Bishop Barry in the chair. The Duke of Rutland

was elected President, and several Bishops and leading medical men gave their names as Vice-Presidents. This Society is now known by the name of the "Church Society for Training the Speaking Voice."

The next important step was that at the meeting of the Headmasters' Conference in 1898, a resolution was carried to the effect that "Instruction and training in the proper use of the voice should form part of a Public School Education." In supporting the resolution, Canon the Hon. E. Lyttelton, Headmaster of Haileybury College, mentioned the appalling fact that "no fewer than one thousand teachers in London alone were at that moment incapacitated from work by the wrong use of the voice."

The late Sir John Stainer, in his last Report to the Education Board, spoke of the "lamentable cases" amongst young teachers, especially the women teachers, of the entire loss of voice through not being taught voice-production.

In my own experience last year in the North of England, I am sure I am within the mark in stating that not ten per cent. of four hundred Board School Teachers who passed through my hands had the slightest idea how to adapt the

voice to Class teaching. I fear we must acknowledge the truth of some of the sweeping assertions made by Mr. Sandlands in his book on Public Speaking,—for instance, that nearly all voices are “wrongly produced”—that “a beautiful voice is looked upon as a freak of nature,” that “while we train mentally, physically, practise gymnastics of every other kind, we have no vocal gymnastics, and, therefore,” he says, “we have no voices! We have every species of noise in the human voice, from the croaking of a toad to the roaring of a bull. These deformities,” he adds, “may all be removed and replaced by elegances. There is a peculiar charm in a good voice even in conversation which few other things can inspire. Then why not seek to make good voices—tuneful voices the rule, and not the exception? If every speaker had a trained voice there would not be so much waste. As things are, the waste is most profuse. Many a sermon, many a political speech is utterly lost in its delivery, and many again, though not entirely ineffectual, fail to attain their object. The matter is good enough, but the manner is wrong.” The remedy Mr. Sandlands also proposes is that in all our Schools and Colleges there should be a teacher of Voice-Production—the “Phonascus” of classical ages once more!

I may perhaps mention a remarkable case that came under my own notice quite recently — a public speaker, on whose utterances there was the one universal verdict, “Excellent matter spoilt in the delivery.” He was an eloquent Irishman, but all his eloquence was poured forth—not in the rich musical cadences and thrilling modulations of a well-trained, well-tuned voice, but in a monotonous, “wiry,” expressionless falsetto, while all the time the beautiful music which would have entranced his hearers was there, hidden away in his chest! It was as though one were to put the priceless “Strad.” under a glass case in a museum, and attempt to render the glories of a Mozart on a half-crown fiddle; and yet this is precisely what is done every day with “that most exquisite of all musical instruments,” as the late Sims Reeves called it, “the human voice.”

Yes, we must learn to tune and to play this musical instrument, which is far more wonderful and beautiful than the finest Stradivarius ever handled by the great Dr. Joachim.

Let us hear what Hullah says again: “The *vox humana* of the Divine Artificer is an incomparably more beautiful instrument than any of its compeers. Fearfully and wonderfully is it made.



Not only is its mechanism more intricate, not only are its component parts more numerous and delicate than those of any artificial organ, but the action of these is complicated by a condition from which every other instrument is free. The instrumental performer has merely to *play*; the vocal performer has not merely to *play*, but to *say*—and both at the same instant. . . . There is no saying without (some) singing: that which is effectively and agreeably said must be (partially) sung. ‘*Est in dicendo etiam quidam cantus obscurior.*’” To this subtle music of speech, we may almost apply the words of Portia:—

“It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed—  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

But then, if this singing *timbre* is exaggerated, it may degenerate into what is popularly called “sing-song”—a by no means flattering epithet to apply to an oration—or to an orator! We have always to avoid a Scylla and a Charybdis, or, as the eloquent Bishop of Ripon said lately on Thrift, “A virtue may quickly become a vice.”

A public speaker must be careful to observe the *juste milieu*—that his Speaking Voice may have the musical *timbre* without passing into “sing-song,”

or, in other words, when he is expected to *spea*k, he must not *sing* (after a fashion)! “By universal consent,” Hullah says, “the highest tribute to a voice is conveyed in the word *musical*—not used figuratively or analogically, but simply and directly. By a *musical* voice is always meant a voice the very sound of which gives pleasure, altogether irrespective of the sense conveyed by it. The problem is, how is speech to be made more musical without being turned into song?” (not to mention sing-song!). Hullah in part answers his own question by saying that “the Speaking Voice would be best formed, and soonest brought under control, by the practice of musical sounds, in other words by learning to sing.”

It would seem that the Americans recognize the distinct difference often existing between the *timbre* of the Singing Voice and the Speaking Voice more fully than ourselves, if one may judge from the following paragraph by an American writer which appeared lately in the *Westminster Gazette*:—“Although you have as a nation amazingly bad singing voices, your speaking voices are the most musical in the world.” I wonder if we, as a nation, quite deserve the last favourable opinion!

Hitherto we have been considering what the learned men of Science and Art say, each in his own

sphere of thought. Now may I be permitted to quote from another author, a medical man, who is also a musician—the ideal legislator on such a subject, enjoying as he does the exceptional advantage of being able to study the voice from the standpoints both of physiology and music. The admirable little book from which I will now give one or two extracts is by Dr. William Aikin (M.D., Bruxelles, and M.R.C.S., London), and is, I believe, the most recent work on the voice by a medical writer.† In alluding to the “vocal chaos,” Dr. Aikin remarks :—“Everyone who approaches the subject of voice production is amazed and perplexed at the extraordinary diversity of opinion which exists among those who are to be regarded as authorities in this matter. Almost every master has a system peculiarly his own. . . . . There can be no doubt that the deficiency of scientific facts which can be clearly demonstrated, is at the root of the lamentable confusion of ideas in connection with the voice. . . . . Physiologists, who understand thoroughly all the physical and chemical processes of the human body, may be entirely devoid of that sense which would enable them to distinguish different tones of voice. On the other hand, musicians are commonly not

† “The Voice, its Physiology and Cultivation” (Macmillan)

sufficiently masters of the subject of physics and physiology to analyse and explain the real nature of the sounds which their ears delight in. What we really want is a more definite understanding between the scientific and artistic representatives, which would serve as a foundation for all methods—some clearly defined physiological basis upon which singers and speakers may ground the production of their voices without danger of ruining them. . . . There can be no doubt that the possession of a voice depends upon the formation of the organs in the body. In fact the instrument has to be built for the singer in the same way that the violin has to be made for the violinist. The problem of voice-building is as purely physiological as the making of violins is mechanical.” Dr. Aikin concludes his introductory remarks from which I have quoted, by saying, “The Voice, then, must first be beautifully made, and afterwards beautifully used. For the first part of the process we must look to the physiologist; for the second, to the musician. . . . Considering the great importance of the voice in speaking, reading, preaching, declaiming, or pronouncing foreign languages, it may justly be regarded as a necessary part of education to go through a certain amount of drudgery to attain some improvement in these, even when singing is not contemplated.”

That the revival of this "Lost Art"—this training of the Speaking Voice—as a branch of education is a most real object and not a mere figment of the faddist's brain, I trust you are all agreed. There are many and urgent reasons in favour of it, impossible to discuss now ; but may I commend to your notice three which appear to me sufficiently important in themselves to justify a plea for right Voice-production : (1) to save your own throats ; (2) to save other people's nerves ; (3) to make this beautiful world more beautiful by adding to its music.

And now I must say a few words on the subject of "Voice-Economy"—a term to which considerable prominence has been given in the Circular to Training Colleges and Pupil Teacher Centres (No. 408) issued by the Education Department in 1897, as a result of the Memorial on Voice-Training of the British Medical Association.

In the first place, it is well to note that sparing or saving the voice, by which I suppose we may understand the term "Voice-Economy," is not always an unmixed blessing. The majority of throat disorders do not arise from over-exertion of the vocal organs, but from wrong production of the voice, and to use a voice "on the rim," as it were, without full inspiration and free exercise of

the laryngeal and other muscles does not save the vocal organs. If these are in a healthy state, and the voice is rightly produced, the vocal mechanism becomes the stronger by use, while the voice itself acquires richness and strength. A medical man has said that the voice becomes "rusty" by injudicious rest.

The best interpretation to be put on the term Voice-Economy may, I think, be expressed in the following simple rules:—

1. Never exert the voice to the verge of harshness.
2. Pronounce the vowels and consonants (but especially the vowels) distinctly.
3. Use the resonator correctly and strongly.
4. Rest the voice after prolonged speaking.

In conclusion, I must point, though only very briefly, to the nature of the reform proposed. And first, that proper attention be given to the health of the respiratory passages—from the nose to the diaphragm—at all times of life, but more especially in early childhood; secondly, that among the child's first teachers there should be at least an elementary acquaintance with the physiology of the vocal organs, and some knowledge of the principles of scientific voice-training; subsequently at

school, that some attention be given to the subject ; finally, at the University, at the Divinity and other Schools, that a recognized course of physical voice-training form part of the ordinary curriculum, and that certificates of qualification as public speakers should be required of all those entering the clerical and scholastic professions.

One last word. We have been listening during this "Summer Meeting" to eloquent histories of educational battles fought and won—the most recent perhaps, that for the higher education of women. The battle for the restoration of a "Lost Art" is still being fought, and, we hope, will be won. "Forward" is our watchword, and, with the torch of Science as our guide, we go confidently

"Forward into triumph,  
Forward into light."

**Church Society for Training the Speaking Voice,**  
39, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.,  
AND 21, ST. MICHAEL'S STREET, OXFORD.

## BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

429, Strand, London, W.C.,

*November 18th, 1893.*

SIR,

I am directed to forward to you herewith copy of Memorial on Voice Training which has been adopted by the Council of the British Medical Association, and ordered to be sent out to Public Schools, the Universities, and other public bodies interested in the question.

I am, Yours obediently,

FRANCIS FOWKE,

General Secretary.

## MEMORIAL ON VOICE TRAINING.

The COUNCIL of the BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, acting on the suggestion of the Section of Laryngology at the Annual Meeting of the Association held at Nottingham last year, venture to approach you on the subject of the training of the voice in persons who are, or who are likely to be, engaged in work which necessitates the frequent use of the voice in reading, in speaking, or in singing.

For some years past it has been matter of common observation among those of the medical profession who practise in diseases of the throat, that clergymen of all denominations, persons engaged in teaching, barristers, singers, &c., are frequently disabled from following their vocation, either for the time or permanently, by affections of the throat, which are *due to improper use of*



*the voice.* Even those with strong throats are not proof against the evils which are produced by this cause; while those whose throats are naturally weak perform their daily work under a constant strain and the fear of breaking down.

Enquiry and observation have taught those who are interested in such matters that a large number of teachers of singing are not themselves acquainted with the best method of using the voice, and are therefore not able to impart it to their pupils; while educational establishments, in which boys are taught and young men are trained for the various Churches, for the Bar, for Teaching, &c., rarely profess to furnish any instruction in the use of the voice, and still more rarely carry out such instruction with the thoroughness it deserves.

Seeing how much distress is occasioned by the lack of this instruction and how much valuable time and suffering might be spared by it, the Council of the British Medical Association venture to beg that you will take this matter into your grave consideration, and, either alone or in concert with the heads of other educational bodies, devise such means as may seem best fitted to remedy what appears to be a grave defect in the later education of many of our youth of both sexes.

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